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NOTES ON MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

AMERICAN CITIES.

Greater New York.*—*The Election.*—The election held on the eighth of November was chiefly for state officers. The principal matter of local concern to the voters of New York City was the election of three judges of the supreme court in the first judicial district, which includes the borough of Manhattan and part of the borough of the Bronx. Of the three judges whose places were to be filled two were eligible for re-election. One of these was Judge Joseph F. Daly, who had served as judge for twenty-eight years. He had been elected as a Tammany candidate; and, having made an excellent record, deserved a renomination almost as a matter of course, in accordance with the well-established practice. Tammany's refusal to nominate him this year was openly stated to be that Judge Daly had refused to appoint as an officer of his court a man who was selected by the organization, but whom Judge Daly believed to be unfit. The nominee of Tammany for Judge Daly's place was condemned by the Bar Association as unworthy. A strong committee of one hundred was organized, and an active campaign was conducted against the Tammany judicial candidates, upon the simple issue of the independence of the judiciary. Tammany was, however, successful throughout the city, electing nearly all its candidates, to the bench, to congress, and to the state legislature.

The campaign was marked by two interesting developments in the career of Richard Croker, the boss of Tammany. He made a successful effort to get control of the state machine of the Democratic party, and, as state boss, he dictated the nominations which were made by the Democratic party. Perhaps as a result of this widening of his vision, he changed his policy of silence. At short intervals during the campaign he gave out more or less elaborate statements in the nature of campaign documents, but in the guise of "Interviews" or of "Speeches to the Executive Committee of Tammany Hall."

The Election Law.—The experience of the Committee of One Hundred for the independence of the judiciary emphasized the cumbersome and confused character of the present election law,

*Communication of James W. Pryor, Esq., Secretary, City Reform Club.

with its party columns and its almost necessarily complicated provisions for splitting one's ticket in any case in which three or four candidates are to be elected to any one office. Appreciation of the defects of the law is now much more general in this city than it was before the last election; and the time is propitious for agitation for an improved and simplified law which shall place all candidates and all voters upon an equal footing. So far as the city is concerned, it is of great importance that this reform in the election law should be secured before the next great municipal election, in 1900.

City Budget.—The city budget for 1899 was adopted by the board of estimate and apportionment on the last day of October, and is now before the municipal assembly. The total amount is \$93,500,000. In a formal statement accompanying the charter as drafted by the charter commission, a majority of the commissioners placed the probable amount of the annual budget at \$60,000,000.

Chicago.*—*City Schools.*—An important change was made in the conduct of the public schools of Chicago when the new board of education last summer elected as superintendent President Andrews, of Brown University. This was not brought about without elaborate and persistent efforts. Some friction between the board and the superintendent has developed already and the resignation of the superintendent is threatened. This grows out of a desire by certain members of the board to dictate the appointment of school principals, to which the superintendent does not accede and it is not certain how far the conflict may be carried. Such control by the board is not in accord with the recommendations in the elaborate report of the Educational Commission, which is finished but not yet accessible.

Street Railways. The absorbing question just now in Chicago is as to the future of the street railway franchises. With this end in view the companies are straining every nerve and enlisting every influence in their power. An effort to obtain the support of the real estate board for these measures, however, has resulted in ignominious failure. This body, mainly composed of the leading real estate agents and brokers of the city, is influential and representative in its character and has taken a leading part in promoting revenue legislation and other reforms closely related to taxation and real estate interests, and its endorsement was eagerly sought by the companies. An attempt to rush through a special meeting by dark lantern methods, at which representatives of the street railway companies argued the question from their standpoint was defeated; and resolutions subse-

*Communication of Newton L. Partridge, Esq.

quently introduced on their behalf at a regular meeting were voted down by an overwhelming majority.

The ordinances were prepared and, as usual in such cases, were kept in absolute secrecy until presented to the council at its meeting on December 5. The immediate occasion of this attempt to obtain renewals of ordinances, the first of which will not expire until 1903, is to be found in the fear that the legislature may and probably will repeal the amendment to the street railway law called the "Allen Bill," passed in 1897. For many years, twenty years has been the limit fixed by statute for street railway ordinances, but the limit was made fifty years and the minimum fare was fixed at five cents for the first twenty years by the "Allen Bill." The probability of its repeal is based upon the facts that a majority of the members who voted for that act were not re-elected, while many were defeated for nomination, or at the polls upon that issue alone; that a majority in the house have publicly stated that they will vote for a repeal; and that Governor Tanner seems to have broken definitely with the corporate interests to seek popular support.

A committee of the Civic Federation has been engaged for some months in the investigation of matters connected with the proper relations of street railways to the municipality, and with special reference to the amount of compensation to be obtained from the companies. For several weeks an expert accountant has examined the books of the street railway companies on behalf of this committee whose labors are now approaching completion and a report from whom embodying their conclusions may soon be expected.

Should the council pass the ordinances meantime, of course this labor will be largely lost. These ordinances, as introduced, provide for a compensation for fifty year franchises, ranging from nothing to a maximum of three per cent of gross earnings. It may be confidently asserted that a severe struggle will be required to rally the forty-six votes necessary to pass these ordinances; for the mayor will hotly contest their passage and he will be aided by a strong public agitation which will surely bring much pressure to bear on the aldermen.

Boston.*—Municipal Concerts.—The organization of a music commission to take charge of the musical entertainments given by the city has been the cause of an important extension of municipal activities in the direction of popular recreation. Usually such entertainments are confined to open-air concerts given during the summer in various parts of a city. With the creation of the music

* Communication of Sylvester Baxter, Esq.

commission a marked improvement in this respect takes place. A municipal band has been organized and concerts are given in various parks and other open spaces throughout the city at a considerable saving of expense and with a marked improvement in the character of the music. For the winter, indoor concerts have been decided upon. These are proving remarkably successful in every way. About thirty years ago a course of several free municipal concerts was given in Music Hall, but the practice was abandoned. This year a course of municipal concerts has been instituted in Music Hall, with a municipal orchestra organized for the purpose and with vocal soloists. A charge of ten and twenty-five cents is made, according to location of seats. The order of music is high, comprising such selections from classical and standard composers as are popularly pleasing. The audiences have filled the hall moderately. After one or two concerts were given it was stated by the corporation counsel that the city had no legal authority to give entertainments for which an admission fee was charged, so the direct municipal backing had to be withdrawn, the music commission continuing to act as the agent for public-spirited persons who had contributed a guarantee fund for the purpose. It seems probable, however, that the concerts will prove not only self-sustaining but yield a profit, to be devoted to the city hospital. The circumstance that the music commission is in charge of the concerts makes them *de facto*, though not *de jure*, "municipal." The objection of the corporation counsel does not apply, however, to the chamber concerts given by a municipal string quartette in suitable halls in the various sections of the city, for no entrance fee is charged for these, the tickets being distributed free of cost, through the agency of school teachers and other prominent persons in each section, to those who are likely to enjoy such entertainments. These municipal concerts have a real educational value, for they enable high-class music to be enjoyed by persons who otherwise would not be likely to hear it.

Municipal Camp for Boys.—The past summer, on the recommendation of the mayor, a municipal camp for boys was instituted on city land at Long Island in the harbor. It was planned to accommodate a hundred deserving boys from the public schools; a week at a time. In all, 831 boys enjoyed the privilege. A simple, but varied and substantial dietary was provided. The organization was on a semi-military basis, the daily schedule being made up of reveille, roll-call and drill, salute to colors, breakfast, police duty, inspection of quarters, guard mount, dinner, guard mount again, followed by recreation and lectures, supper, sunset-flag, camp-fire

talks, and, at 9.30, taps. The total cost of the camp was \$2499.08, leaving a balance of 92 cents within the appropriation of \$2500. For another year it is proposed to appoint an unpaid advisory and executive board to take charge of the camp, to lay a greater emphasis on military forms in administration and discipline, to give increased attention to elementary instruction in natural science, military hygiene and out-of-door sports, and to secure the co-operation of the school committee in developing the suggested scheme of instruction. In commenting on the matter, Mayor Quincy points to the low cost of maintenance, \$1.83 per capita, and says that for \$10,080, five hundred boys at a time could be kept in camp for a week each during a season of ten weeks, or five thousand boys in all.

Cleveland.*—*Street Railway Fares.*—There are two street railway companies in Cleveland which hold between them all of the nine franchises originally granted, together with renewals and extensions. The franchises were granted for twenty or twenty-five years, and existing grants expire from 1904 till 1914. The city council has recently passed ordinances reducing the fares on two lines. The ordinances provide for a four-cent cash fare and the sale of seven tickets for twenty-five cents. The lines affected do about one-fourth of the total street railway business of Cleveland. The companies have secured a temporary injunction in the United States circuit court restraining the city from enforcing the ordinances on two grounds, namely, that the ordinances are in violation of the contract rights of the companies, and that the rates of fare fixed by the ordinances are unreasonable. The case will probably be carried through to the United States Supreme Court as quickly as possible, whatever the decision of the lower courts may be. The present city administration has made a political issue of the street railway question during the last two councilmanic campaigns. The result can be seen in the vote on the low fare ordinances. In the fall of 1897 the same ordinances were defeated by a tie vote in the city council. A year later they were passed with every councilman present voting in the affirmative. The Reynolds ordinances introduced in 1897 to grant a uniform renewal of franchises for twenty-five years on terms favorable to the companies were defeated with difficulty. Since then the state legislature has repealed the Rogers fifty-year franchise law enacted in 1896, and the people have declared emphatically in favor of lower fares and against the renewal of franchises until the existing ones expire. There is no doubt that the sentiment in favor of municipal ownership of at least the tracks and roadbed is rapidly increasing. Under the present state laws the city has no

* Communication of Dr. Delos F. Wilcox.

power to buy the roads. But if the legal difficulties are removed, it seems quite possible that there may never be a general renewal of street railway franchises in Cleveland. Mr. William R. Hopkins, whose able monograph on "The Street Railway Problem in Cleveland" was published by the American Economic Association in 1896, is a member of the city council, and has been one of the leaders in the fight for lower fares. It is hoped that the present litigation will compel the companies to produce their books, and that the city will come into the possession of facts which will put it into a better position for making a good bargain with the companies when the existing franchises expire. If the courts should sustain the low fare ordinances, there would remain a few years in which to observe their effects before the first franchise expires. This is a part of the general policy outlined by Mr. Hopkins in his monograph and ably supported by him in the city council.

Cincinnati.—*Parks.**—The citizens of Cincinnati, by a vote of over thirty thousand nays to twelve thousand ayes, resolved against the proposed \$2,000,000 park extension bonds. The strong opposition was due solely to the fear of increased taxation. A few weeks before the election, the mayor appointed a park commission composed of men who had the respect of the community, but the *personnel* of this board could not save the measure. The defeat of this park project is greatly to be regretted, for the city at present has a very small park area.

Local Election.—The bar movement, called forth by the turning down on the part of the boss of a reputable judge, was not successful. The lawyers were handicapped in not having a daily paper to advocate this cause. The candidate disapproved of by them ran nearly 7000 behind his ticket, and only 3000 ahead of his opponent. At a normal election (the Republican majority was over 13,000, normally it is between 5000 and 6000) the movement would have succeeded despite the fact of straight ticket voting. This method of voting, by placing an X in the circle at the head of the ticket is a great drawback to independent candidates.

Providence.†—*City Charter.*—In February, 1896, a committee was appointed to draft a new city charter for Providence. The modifications of the old charter of 1832 have been comparatively few for a city that has grown from 17,000 in 1832 to about ten times that number. The requirements of the present city are far different from those of the small community of 1832, and the need of a new charter

* Communication of Max B. May, Esq.

† Communication of Professor George G. Wilson, Brown University.

which shall make it possible to manage the municipality on modern business principles is evident.

On November 17, 1898, the committee appointed nearly two years earlier submitted their report. This committee consisted of the following representative men: William C. Baker (mayor and chairman), Charles C. Nichols, Robert B. Little, Rathbone Gardner, Charles Sisson, William Gammell and Arthur L. Brown. The report of this committee resembles in many respects the report presented to the New York State Legislature for the government of second-class cities. The adoption of this new charter would bring Providence into line with modern municipal ideas and would certainly secure an efficient and responsible administration. It is hoped that the city council will adopt the new charter without serious modification and that the general assembly of the state will ratify this action. The nature of the new charter is best briefly given in the words of the commission:

"First. The proposed charter aims to confer upon the municipality such powers of self-government as are ample for the performance of its proper municipal functions, and no more. It is hoped thereby to obviate the necessity of constant application to the State Legislatures for special enabling acts, and to do away with the interference of successive legislatures in the affairs of the city, which has been found so contrary to the principle of municipal home rule, and so destructive of wise and consistent municipal action, in accordance with the will of a majority of our citizens.

"Second. The Commission has aimed at the entire separation of legislative and executive functions which, under our present system, are now so confused.

"Third. They have provided for a single legislative body, with careful safeguards against hasty action. The members of this body, except the president, are to serve without pay, and to be elected biennially.

"Fourth. They have conferred upon the mayor the largest executive powers, giving to him the appointment of all executive officers and boards, in the belief that in accordance with the modern theory, now almost uniformly adopted in this country, better results are obtained where the responsibility rests upon one individual, rather than upon a large number.

"Fifth. The actual executive functions are performed by boards who appoint their own administrative officers, instead of by committees of the legislative body, as at present. Among these boards are:

"(a) A Board of Estimate and Apportionment, consisting of the

mayor, the comptroller (substituted for our present city auditor), the city solicitor, the city treasurer, the president of the common council, and the president of the Board of Tax Assessors.

"This board makes up the appropriations for all departments, which may be reduced, but can not be increased, by the Common Council.

"(b) A Board of Contract and Supply, consisting of the mayor, the comptroller, the commissioner of public works, the city solicitor and city engineer.

"This board makes contracts for all work, material and supplies to be performed or furnished for the city.

"(c) A Police Board, which is composed of three (3) commissioners appointed by the mayor, to whom is entrusted the entire administration of the Police Department, and the appointment of all officers. The members of this board are to receive such salaries as the Common Council shall ordain.

"(d) A Board of Public Instruction, composed of six (6) commissioners, appointed by the mayor, to serve without pay, who have entire charge of the administration of the Public School System.

"(e) A Board of Fire Commissioners, who are salaried officers, and who have charge of the administration of the Fire Department, and the appointment of its employees.

"(f) A Board of three (3) Assessors of Taxes, who are salaried officers, who perform the duties now imposed upon the assessors of taxes in the city, with some modifications, the chief of which is that the board is required to make up tentative lists of assessment, which are open to examination of taxpayers, and subject to change and revision during a limited period.

"(g) A Board of Health, consisting of four (4) members, serving without pay, and of which the city engineer is also a member, who have entire charge of everything relating to the health of the city, appointing the superintendent of health, and not more than seven (7) district physicians.

"(h) A Board of Charities and Corrections, to serve without pay, who appoint the overseer of the poor, and have charge of the administration of the Poor Department.

"(i) A Board of Canvassers and Registration, performing the duties of the present board, but receiving their appointment from the mayor, and entitled to a salary fixed by the Common Council.

"In the provisions with reference to the lay out of streets and highways, the commissioners are authorized to assess upon the parties benefited the entire land damages and the cost of construction involved in the building of new streets."

Alameda, Cal.—Referendum.*—The city of Alameda, Cal., containing 15,000 inhabitants, is a residence town, and is practically a suburb of San Francisco. It is said to be the only city of its size in California enjoying a non-partisan government. On March 4, 1895, it passed what is known as the Referendum Ordinance, which provides:

“**SECTION 1.** Whenever ten per cent of the legal voters of the city of Alameda shall petition in writing therefor the Board of Trustees thereof shall submit to said voters such proposition of local public interest as may be specified in said petition, said submission to be made for the purpose of enabling the said voters to express their approval or disapproval of the question so to be voted upon, and to be made in the form and manner in the ordinance hereafter provided.

“**SEC. 2.** The signatures to said petition need not all be appended to one paper, but each signer shall add to his signature his place of residence, giving the street and number. One of the signers of such paper or papers shall swear that the statements therein made are true and that each signature to said paper appended is the genuine signature of the person whose name is thereto subscribed.

“**SEC. 3.** Whenever such petition shall have been filed with the city clerk of the city of Alameda not less than fifteen days prior to any general or municipal election, it shall be the duty of said city clerk to cause to be printed on the ballot to be used at the said election then ensuing (provided said ensuing election is to be a municipal election), the question to be voted upon, in the manner and form prescribed by law for voting on constitutional amendments and other questions.

“**SEC. 4.** In case said ensuing election is to be a general election, the city clerk shall cause to be printed ballots containing the question to be voted upon as in Section 3 of this ordinance; provided said ballots to conform in other respects to the requirements of the laws of the State of California. And the Board of Trustees shall provide separate boxes for the reception of the same.

“**SEC. 5.** The result of said balloting shall be embodied in the records of said board, and shall be regarded by the trustees of said board as expressing the wishes of the majority of the voters of the city of Alameda, and as advisory of the line of action of said board.”

This ordinance has received the endorsement of every local convention during each of the last two city campaigns. According to Section 5, the wishes of a majority of voters expressed in accordance with this law are considered as advisory only. Yet probably no official with a regard for his political future would disregard the pronounced preference of the people upon a question of public interest. On two occasions the law has been put in operation. In one case the question was,

* Communication of G. R. Dodson, Esq., Alameda, Cal.

"Shall a special tax of twenty cents on the \$100 be levied for the purpose of erecting a new library building?" There were 916 yeas and 891 noes, while a large proportion of the voters expressed no opinion upon the subject. As the taxes were quite high that year and the vote did not indicate a strong desire on the part of the people for the new building, nothing was done in the matter.

In 1897, at a general election, there was placed upon the ballots the question, "For the saloon in this precinct?" The vote was as follows:

Precinct.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total.
Yea	105	66	65	78	68	63	55	11	16	95	132	126	53	993
Noe	74	93	65	70	81	59	70	67	67	75	98	49	42	910

It will be noted that there was a majority in favor of the saloon; also, that seven precincts voted for and five against, while in the third precinct there was a tie vote. At the time the vote was taken the city clerk states, there were saloons in precincts number 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11 and 12. Of these seven, only one voted no. Of the six without saloons, two voted to have them. On such a close vote the city trustees did not feel bound to act according to the wishes of the people as expressed by the ballot.

FOREIGN CITIES.

Paris.—*Municipal Taxation.*—During the last few years we have had occasion to discuss the attempts of the French municipalities to reorganize the system of local taxation particularly to abolish the "Octroi." For a long time the central government, as well as the local authorities, have acknowledged the injustice of this form of taxation, particularly because of the heavy burdens which it places upon the poorer classes. The constant demand for a different system has been met with the answer that this form of indirect taxation can not be dispensed with, because of its great productivity. The tax upon the necessities and luxuries of life, which is imposed upon these articles at the gates of the city, offers almost unlimited possibilities of extension. With a budget as heavily weighted as that of Paris, the difficulty of replacing the 151,000,000 francs which these excise taxes furnish is almost insuperable. Commissions, both municipal and state, have been appointed every few years to devise some means of solving the problem, but their proposals have been met either with some local objection or the opposition of the central government. During the present year two commissions have been at work, both presenting reports of very great interest. The greatest

difficulty of supplying the deficit which the abolition of the "*Octroi*" would produce is to be found in the fact that real and personal property is already burdened with high state and local taxes. It is, therefore, necessary to find some other means of raising the necessary income of the city. In the report of the commission it is proposed to rearrange rather than abolish the "*Octroi*" taxes, with a view to placing additional burdens upon what the commission calls the "unnecessary or superfluous consumption," such as alcoholic liquors, beer and the like. Furthermore, to establish a municipal inheritance tax, ranging from 1.25 per cent on the net inheritance in cases of lineal heirs to 11.25 per cent in the cases of persons not related to the testator. Furthermore, a graduated rental tax is to be introduced, ranging from one dollar on rentals of \$100.00 to \$1,500 on rentals of \$10,000 and over. The commission finds, however, that all of these will not furnish sufficient to replace the "*Octroi*" and, therefore, proposes in addition a series of minor taxes, such as :

- First. A tax on owners of horses at a rate of \$14 for each horse.
- Second. A tax on the better class of restaurants amounting to 50 per cent of their rental value.

It seems hardly likely that this rather complicated and in many respects objectionable system of taxation will be accepted by the municipal council, and even if accepted it is probable that the central government will refuse to sanction so radical a change. It is to be noted that the municipal council of Paris, with its radical and even socialistic tendencies, is anxious to shift the burden of taxation from the poorer to the wealthier classes, and in fact to do everything to relieve the working classes from direct contribution to the public treasury.